



# Brownfields Initiatives in Region 6

Office of Outreach and Special Projects (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Currently, there are a number of Regionally funded Brownfields-related activities, such as targeted site assessments in urban areas, financial support of State voluntary cleanup programs, financial support of State regulation development, Inter-governmental Personnel Assignments (IPA) to cities, and outreach activities. Some of these activities are in the form of Regional or National pilots, while others are smaller scale actions such as prospective purchaser agreements. This fact sheet is one in a series of ten which outline Brownfields-related activities occurring in each of the ten Regions.

## OVERVIEW

EPA Region 6 is using financial and human resources to encourage and support the development of State, Tribal, and city Brownfields programs. Through cooperative agreements, Region 6 has funded voluntary cleanup program initiation and development in four States. Region 6 has also increased awareness of its ability to facilitate redevelopment by reducing potential liability for prospective purchasers and redevelopers. Region 6 continues to facilitate redevelopment at brownfields by authorizing prospective purchaser agreements, comfort letters, and "programmatic comfort" addenda to States' Superfund Memoranda of Agreement (SMOAs). For example, the Region mailed "comfort letters" to all owners of properties that were archived from the CERCLIS list.

## PARTNERSHIPS

During the first year of the Brownfields program, much of the Region's efforts focused on conducting an extensive outreach program to assist, inform, and encourage the participation of key stakeholder groups. Numerous meetings were held and presentations were given to a variety of organizations, communities, cities, and professional societies with an interest in the Brownfields Initiative. In addition, the Region sent letters to mayors, heads of State environmental

agencies, Tribal officials, and governors' offices explaining the Region's capacity to provide financial and other support.

The dividends from these efforts are becoming evident, as exemplified by the increased workload being placed on the States' and Region's respective Brownfields programs. To meet the increasing demands, the Region has formed State Brownfields teams to provide better service to States, cities, and Tribes regarding brownfields issues. These teams may conduct preliminary assessments and site investigations, offer remediation recommendations, and provide for any assurances that a city, State, or Tribe might request.

## PILOTS

In July 1995, EPA selected the cities of Laredo, Texas and New Orleans, Louisiana for Brownfields pilots. The City of Laredo's pilot seeks to clean up and redevelop the Paso del Indio area; create a green corridor between the U.S.-Mexican border and the Rio Grande River; facilitate commercial development; and preserve an historic residential neighborhood. The City of New Orleans' pilot seeks to develop an inventory of brownfields in New Orleans to serve as a blueprint for city planners, developers, and investors interested in reclaiming land for industrial or commercial use.

In September 1995, the Region awarded a pilot grant to the City of Dallas, Texas. Pilot funds are being used to determine the magnitude of brownfields in the city and to assess options for the redevelopment of Brownfields properties. The City has also been provided with an IPA for two years to assist in the pilot efforts and to serve as a liaison between the program, city, State, and EPA.

In January 1996, Houston was selected as the fourth Region 6 pilot grant recipient. Houston intends to use the grant to identify candidate sites, conduct environmental assessments of selected sites, coordinate and educate stakeholders, develop educational materials, establish a land redevelopment committee, and evaluate financial incentives for the pilot.

Region 6 is working closely with the pilot cities and the States to develop a computer-based system, using LandView software, to track each program's success.

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